

PSC APPROVES SOUTH HAMBURG EXCHANGE SALE

Jefferson City (June 4, 1998)---The Missouri Public Service Commission has approved an application which authorizes the sale of the South Hamburg exchange from Southwestern Bell Telephone Company to the Rock Port Telephone Company. The Commission's order takes effect on June 15, 1998.

In their application, Southwestern Bell and the Rock Port Telephone Company stated the proposed sale is in the public interest because customers located in the South Hamburg exchange have a community of interest with Rock Port, Missouri and because the South Hamburg exchange would be more economically and efficiently served by the Rock Port Telephone Company. The Rock Port Telephone Company plans to connect the South Hamburg exchange to its Watson exchange with digital fiber optic cable.

At the Commission's April 6th local public hearing, citizens were evenly divided concerning the sale, with 13 speaking in its favor and 13 speaking against it.

Basic local telephone rates: As a result of this case, basic monthly telephone rates for South Hamburg exchange customers will be reduced. The basic monthly telephone rate for one-party residential customers will drop from \$11.45 per line per month to the Rock Port Telephone Company rate of \$5.90 per line per month. The basic monthly telephone rate for one-party business customers will drop from \$23.70 per line per month to the Rock Port Telephone Company rate of \$8.90 per line per month.

South Hamburg exchange customers will no longer be able to call the community of Hamburg, Iowa on a toll free basis as they currently can. However, these customers will gain toll free calling to Rock Port's existing Watson exchange and the Rock Port exchange, including the City of Rock Port.

South Hamburg exchange customers will now be able to call the county seat of Atchison County free and toll calls placed into Iowa will be rated as interstate, interLATA, which are the lowest cost type of toll calls.

(More)

911 Service: The Commission has determined that access to emergency services after the proposed sale will be “at least as good as the access currently available to the customers in the affected exchange.”

Currently, South Hamburg exchange customers who desire emergency service out of Iowa have two choices: (1) dial the appropriate service such as hospital or fire department directly as a toll free call, or (2) dial a ten-digit “1-800” number for dispatch to the appropriate service. If the sale is consummated, customers will retain the first option, but the call will be long distance. Rather than the second option, customers will have the option of dialing 911, only three digits, to have the Atchison County, Missouri Sheriff’s Department route their call to the appropriate Iowa emergency response center. “The Commission finds that the effects of the proposed sale on emergency services will be positive rather than negative.”

The Commission stated in its order: “The Commission finds that the public interest will be served by the proposed sale of the South Hamburg Exchange from SWBT (Southwestern Bell Telephone Company) and RPTC (Rock Port Telephone Company). The Commission places great weight on the opinions of the customers located within the South Hamburg Exchange, as expressed at the April 6 local public hearing.”

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